UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1992/NGO/1
4 June 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH

Substantive session of 1992
29 June-31 July 1992
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and programmes addressed to the mitigation of its negative socio-economic consequences

Statement submitted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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Resolution adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union

THE PANDEMIC NATURE OF ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS): ITS THREAT TO WORLD ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STABILITY, ESPECIALLY IN THE THIRD WORLD; THE PROMOTION OF POLICIES TO TRANSFORM SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE INTO PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO MITIGATE ITS EFFECTS

Resolution adopted by the 87th Inter-Parliamentary Conference
(Yaoundé, 6-11 April 1992)

The 87th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Acknowledging that the control and ultimate elimination of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) will require both identification of the source of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and formulation of means of preventing its spread and achieving a cure,

Deeply concerned that there is presently no cure for AIDS and that the epidemic has already reached pandemic proportions and seriously threatens the very existence of the human race,

Aware that AIDS already adversely affects world economic growth and political and social stability and will continue to do so at an accelerating rate,

Acknowledging that balancing the rights and responsibilities of a wide range of people is a formidable but necessary legislative task of Parliaments,

Convinced that Governments and society at large should do everything in their power to control the spread of AIDS and to mitigate the effects of the pandemic while protecting human rights and civil liberties,

Recognizing that regional cooperation and cooperation with World Health Organization (WHO) agencies will be essential in containing AIDS, which knows no national boundaries,

Considering that intermediary organizations (non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, voluntary agencies), traditional societies and religious institutions have access to and significant influence on people,

Conscious that for countries to be able to meet the escalating cost of preventing AIDS and providing treatment for its victims, Governments will have to restructure expenditure priorities and the developed countries will have to assist the less developed ones,

1. Calls on parliamentarians to acknowledge the scope of the pandemic and to urgently press their respective Governments and community and religious leaders to pursue a comprehensive strategy for controlling the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS, including:

(a) Introduction in school and university curricula of health education for the prevention of AIDS and organizing positive public education and information campaigns that stress the need for preventive measures in the absence of any cure and take into account the sociocultural and religious backgrounds of all citizens and residents in each State;

(b) Testing of donors to blood and other human tissue banks and of donors for organ transplants;

(c) Reporting of infections to health authorities (including WHO) and the undertaking of epidemiological surveillance;

(d) Institution of centrally coordinated policies to ensure effective sterilization procedures in all public health facilities;

(e) Removal of impediments to the trial and marketing of treatments and provision of appropriate treatment to infected individuals;

(f) Counselling of those at particular risk and of those who are already infected, as well as advising of infected individuals about their responsibility to avoid infecting others and ways of minimizing the risk of transmission;

(g) Adoption of infectino-reduction approaches to sexual activity, intravenous drug use and prostitution, and access to condoms and disposable syringes, particularly by HIV-infected people;

(h) Accepting of responsibility for dissuading citizens from engaging in high-risk behaviour outside their own countries;

2. Congratulates the Governments that have already made considerable efforts to concentrate their countries' scientific resources on finding an effective vaccine to combat the scourge of the human immunodeficiency virus, and calls on all Governments to increase their efforts in the area of AIDS prevention;

3. Also calls on all Parliaments and Governments to recognize that AIDS primarily strikes down men and women in the prime of life who are main breadwinners, and stressing that the most tragic victims may be the increasingly large number of children in the developing countries orphaned as a result of the disease, urges Governments to commit adequate resources to their education and welfare;

4. Further calls on Parliaments and Governments to secure payment of compensation to HIV-infected haemophiliacs and receivers of blood transfusions and their HIV-infected spouses and children;

5. Urges Governments to ensure protection of the human rights and civil liberties of people infected or believed likely to be infected.